

PRESS RELEASE



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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WORKS FROM THE MR. AND MRS. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER 3RD COLLECTION ARE ON VIEW AT THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

An exhibition of Early Chinese Art from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection will be on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art until September 28. The nineteen ceramic, bronze, and silver works on loan to Cleveland are a small selection of the Asian art bequeathed by the late Mr. Rockefeller to the Asia Society in New York.

The earliest object in the exhibition is a bronze vessel from the 12th-11th century B.C., which was designed to carry wine for a ritual honoring an ancestor. Its sharply cast buffalo masks and ingenious swing handle show the technical genius of Shang Dynasty artists, but the exact meaning of its animal imagery and of the religion that inspired it remains unclear.

From almost a thousand years later comes a gilt bronze basin with luxurious silver inlay that illustrates the fantastic animals and quasi-human creatures which populated the spirit world of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.).

A silver bowl, delicately beaten in repoussé with plant and animal designs, tells us of the worldly, cosmopolitan culture of the 7th-8th century T'ang Dynasty (618-907), while the material sophistication that prevailed at the T'ang court is captured in a polychrome-glazed pottery statue of a young female musician.

Ceramics of the following Sung Dynasty (960-1279) are represented in the thickly glazed bowls of sturdy chien ware favored by priests and poets for tea drinking and by fine celadons noted for the depth and vigor of their surface designs.

The works on loan to The Cleveland Museum of Art are to be installed in the Asia Society's new gallery in New York City, scheduled to open in early 1981. The Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, which spans the arts of Greater India, Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan, will form the nucleus of a permanent collection for the Asia Society.

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